

IGs are a valuable tool for any leader's toolbox

By Master Sgt. Lisa Hunter

Commanders and first sergeants cover a lot of areas to ensure their Soldiers are combat ready.

Coordinate with Training for weapons qualifications – check.

Touch base with Supply to ensure equipment maintenance – check.

Check with the Family Readiness Group to ensure families are in the information loop – check.

But sometimes they overlook one of the most important tools in their leader's toolbox: the Inspector General.

"Helping commanders stay combat ready is the primary concern of all Army Inspectors General. The readiness of the force is every IG's primary concern," said Army Inspector General Sergeant Major, Sgt. Maj. Peter G. Motta. Motta was sworn in to his position on Sept. 30, 2002. He is only the second sergeant major to hold the position. During his tenure, he has deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan to address IG issues in both theaters.

"IG NCOs are just like any other good NCO: They are experienced noncommissioned officers who are experts in their fields with a proven track record of excellent leadership, physical fitness and readiness, and a sharp appearance," Motta explained.

IG NCOs serve as the "eyes, ears and conscience" of the Army. The Inspector General Corps has a proud heritage dating back to Oct. 29, 1777, when General George Washington decided he needed an Inspector General Corps to ensure the Continental Army was trained and ready, Motta explained. The Inspector General would be the commander's agent to ensure the tactical effectiveness of the Army. He oversaw the training of the entire Army to ensure troop proficiency and standardization of tactics. The IG answered only to the Army chain of command.

Congress approved Washington's request on Dec. 13, 1777. The Congressional resolution stated that the Inspector General would do the following:

- Review the troops;
- See that officers and Soldiers were instructed in exercise maneuvers established by the Board of War;
- Ensure that discipline be strictly observed; and
- Ensure that officers command properly and treat Soldiers with justice.

Not much has changed since Maj. Gen. Von Steuben – better known as Baron Von Steuben, the author of the Army's Blue Book – was appointed as the

first Army Inspector General on May 1, 1778. Today, Inspector General officers and NCOs have the same four core functions that Von Steuben did, according to Motta:

1. Inspections – Inspectors General examine systemic problems within the Army. Their charter is to find the root cause and recommend solutions to solve problems that impact on Army readiness.
2. Assistance – IGs provide Soldiers, family members, civilians, retirees and leaders of all ranks with an avenue to find solutions to problems. IGs complement the chain of command; they don't replace it.
3. Investigations – IGs ensure that all leaders meet the standards Soldiers and the American people expect and demand of the United States Army. The investigations promote everyone's confidence in the chain of command by demonstrating that Army leaders are always held to high standards.
4. Training – IGs teach and train Soldiers and leaders on standards as stated in Army regulations and other policies. The IGs share good news, good ideas and solutions to problems with all the units in their area of responsibility.

Today's IG NCOs are subject-matter experts in their career fields with a broad base of experience gained during their



U.S. Army photo

Sgt. Maj. Peter G. Motta, the Army Inspector General Sergeant Major, spent time in both Iraq and Afghanistan dealing with IG issues and assisting commanders.



Photo courtesy of 10th Mountain Division Public Affairs Office

Master Sgt. John Bosco, IG NCOIC, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, N.Y., takes a ride on a resupply mission to Shkin, Afghanistan. IG NCOs traveled throughout the theater of operations assisting commanders and Soldiers with concerns and issues.

Inspectors General offer a vast resource commanders and NCO leaders can use to increase their units' readiness and efficiency, by providing them with a free, trusted and confidential source that will help make their units more successful, Motta explained.

"During deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, Inspector General NCOs conducted convoy operations, cordon and search missions and building clearing missions," Motta said. "They took on the mission of ensuring that all Soldiers were properly equipped by locating and issuing shortage items to Soldiers."

The IG NCOs also worked with National Guard Soldiers to ensure they received all of their entitlements. They worked on personnel issues ranging from medical treatment to promotions and awards. They also worked to resolve concerns with equipment maintenance, water purification and camp security, Motta said.

"Every Soldier should know that the IG works with the chain of command, not in place of it," Motta explained. "We always ask Soldiers, 'Have you used your chain of command yet?'"

careers. They become IG NCOs through a nominative process that selects only those who have the highest standard of performance, potential, appearance and physical fitness, Motta said.

"We are the fair and impartial fact-finders who are there to help solve problems at all levels of the Army structure. We're the conscience of the Army. We ensure that Soldiers meet the standards and maintain the Army values."



Photo courtesy of 10th Mountain Division Public Affairs Office

Besides helping commanders with issues, IGs also provided support during convoy operations. Above, members of the 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry, 10th Mountain Division prepare to depart on a convoy mission in Afghanistan.